1: Burrows--61 (1947-48) Woleaians
562, 285 Ifalik

"Meanwhile women have been making one of their two contributions to the construction of the canoe--plaiting strips of mat for the sail. (The other is the indirect one of supplying food to the workers.) The strips are about a foot wide, of unbleached pandanus leaf, plaited in simple check with wefts about one quarter inch wide. In length the strips vary from one nearly the full length of the forward spar or gaff, to one only a little longer than it is wide. All will be attached at one end to the lower spar or boom. The other end will form a selvage along the open or after side of the sail. The longest strip will be attached along one side to the upper spar or yard. Each successive strip, counting from this side, is shorter until the last one, at the corner where boom and open side meet, shows as a triangle. Except for overlap, it is only about as long as it is wide on the forward side, and comes down to a point on the after corner."

1: Burrows--107 (1947-48) Woleaians
562 Ifalik

"Women hardly ever enter a canoe-house; rarely even pass in front of one. (We were told one story--submitted as true, but remembered because it was considered funny--of illegal sexual relationships between an Ifalik man and a Mogmog woman, on a platform over the tie-beams of a canoe-house in Mogmog. But this account of behavior abroad--behavior as improper as it would be with us--is hardly an exception to the rule that Ifalik women keep out of canoe-houses.)"

1: Burrows--115
116, 462, 562

(1947-48)

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Although the number of tasks allotted to men and to women in the table is about the same, most of the time-consuming drudgery falls to the women. Whenever we suggested this to any of the men, they admitted that it was so. Their stock defense against the implication that they were not doing their full share was: 'But we do the dangerous kinds of work. We are the ones who risk our lives at sea, and climb trees to gather coconuts and toddy.' Men also do the kinds of work that require extreme muscular effort, as lifting heavy timbers into place in the superstructure of a house, and extreme endurance, as a long sea-voyage (women take such voyages, but less often). Women certainly have their time more fully taken up with work than men do. And their work, if less risky, is more monotonous. On the whole, they have far the harder time of it.

Nevertheless, the women can hardly be called downtrodden. Though ostensibly subordinate in most matters, their work is not supervised by men. In accordance with the high value placed on kindly speech, they are not ordered about. Within the limits set by tradition, they manage to do as they please a good deal of the time. They make use of their sexual attractiveness to win at least occasional deference. Several times the chief Maroligar came to us, rather sheepishly, to request a can of meat or fish for his ailing wife. Our impression was, not that he was using her as a pretext, but that he was somewhat henpecked."

1: Burrows--182
116, 562, 343, 784

(1947-48)

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Associated with this, to some extent, is one permanent taboo. Women must never enter canoe-houses. They even avoid those sections of the main path along the shore which pass immediately in front of canoe-houses. Along most of the settled part of Rauau there is an alternate path farther inland, among the house platforms. Women going from FalārIk district to Falālap, for example, will leave the main path as it approaches the canoe-house Fan ni Wā, and follow the inland path all the way to the channel. The foreshore is not forbidden to them, however, except for narrow strips directly shoreward from the canoe-houses. Even these are not so strictly taboo as the houses themselves. But if a woman crosses them, she will usually go along the beach, or at least not immediately in front of the canoe-house. Sometimes, as during the nightly rehearsals for the men's dances, women will sit very near the canoe-houses, nearly under their eaves."

2: Damm et al. --168 [3] (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 262, 562 Faraulep

Certain food restrictions apply to the women, and they are never allowed to touch the following kinds of fish: bŭp, liwelŭ, faĭ, bă̆xo, nawŭt, mŏ̆ru, nŏ̆s, uăt.

2: Damm et al. --190 (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 422, 562 Faraulep

Personal possessions are divided between the sexes;

the man has:	the woman has:
the dwelling	taro swamps
coconut palms	kitchen utensils
tools	occasionally a canoe
fishing utensils	

2; Damm et al. --190 [2] (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 423, 562 Faraulep

Together they [KS: men and women] own bananas and bread-fruit trees, while the large canoes and the big canoe-house belong to the village. The chief has to look after the repairs, but the villagers are ready to assist him.

3: Thilenius and Hellwig--251 (1909-10) 1927 Woleaians
116, 609, 562 Woleai

The natives Hellwig had to deal with were friendly and courteous, and the children were by no means shy. The visit of the whites was a rare event and due to this event everybody seemed to be stimulated into a good mood. It became apparent that the women were allowed a great deal of freedom. It did not matter that a white man was sitting alone with a [native] woman in a hut, or that a woman sold her property to the white on her own accord. They joked and laughed... and on every occasion they mixed songs, recited or sung, into the conversation or with business, and sometimes these songs were accompanied by rhythmic dance movements. The information which was given about a weaving loom on which a mosquito net of Hibiscus fiber was woven, was constantly and in the most funny manner interrupted by an old lady. Her flow of words had been acclaimed by the women with laughter even before the woman had squeezed herself in through the low door opening. She seemed to be a popular "jestress." In front of the narrow door of another house another gray-haired woman sat weaving so that Hellwig was unable to enter. In her stoical calmness she remained unimpressed by the persuasion of either Hellwig or the female occupants of the house. Finally, Hellwig pushed the old woman aside and went into the hut; with a little gift he atoned for his tour de force, and, after that the old woman became the friendliest person of all.

4: Krämer--76 (1909) 1937 Woleaians-1-2
116, 285, 291, 531, 562 Lamotrek

First Type of Mat
(cf. Plate 6, 7, 10 [VMM: see source]).

Mats of hibiscus with a pattern of seven stripes are worn by women, whereas mats with seven stripes worn by men are made of banana fibers.

The éllepat a le gílifer is such a hibiscus mat for women; it has seven black stripes and six light stripes of yellowish natural color between them; the effect in the case of the latter is produced by some groups of white, shiny, banana fibers. Some white banana fibers. Some white banana threads are even introduced into the black stripes; they are used either one or two at one time and are so fine and thin that they do not weaken the impression of blackness. The effect of most of the double threads in the black fields is purely ornamental. In order to produce this effect, four shed formations are necessary, whereas the entire remaining part of the mat is woven with the two sheds of the plain weave. To weave ornamental stitches by means of the four shed formation is known as gásuitieb, two shed or plain weave--aláli pelách. From now on I shall talk about these types of weaves using the native terms; the word for banana fiber is uidj, that for hibiscus fibers gilifer.

garier is the name for the seven striped men's mat which is made of uidj. It is woven with finer threads than the women's mat and, when especially fine, it is known as garier kénusch (Plate 6i [VMM: see source]).

Most common are plain weaves, aláli pelách, but also three and four shed patterns,

gásuitiĕb, with the above described ornamental effect in the black stripes occur. galut is the term for a seven-striped mat, in which the pattern appears as in gásuitiĕb on both sides. It is a four shed pattern.

4: Krämer--267 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
116, 562, 837 Woleai

Mertens says that the women had a lot of freedom and that, as on Feis, they came on board alone without paying much attention to the men. Occasionally they pulled up alongside of the ship in their canoes and called the names of their friends. Everything needs their consent. On the other hand, men have been known to offer their wives to their overnight guests.

At meetings and on the occasion of visits of strangers, the women keep silent.

Lütke says that many terms are taboo (pennant) in the presence of women; in case of negligence, exile threatens the offender.

5: Kittlitz--155-56
116, 562, 609, 834

(1827-8) 1858

Woleaians
Woleai

Here too all the women were hidden at first, and the men who accompanied us kept crying: farak! farak! [156] every time that we came near one of these little houses that were all closed up. If anyone of us made any move to stay there, the natives all behaved like people who did not want any fooling about the matter. But on the whole they paid much less attention to us than did the men on Lugunor, and it soon came about that I took one of the most frequented paths on Uleai and met a woman who was walking alone too. She did not flee as the ones on Lugunor had done; but when I tried to talk to her, she looked around anxiously as if she were afraid that somebody might be angry if she were seen with me; and on this account, I did not accompany her as far as the door of her dwelling. On the fourth day after our arrival the men themselves began to present their wives to us, but it was simply in order that we might give them presents because immediately afterwards we heard the farak! farak! again. On the morning of the 8th of April we saw several canoes of women, who were rowing around our ship and who seemed to be looking at it attentively although from a safe distance.

12: Lutke--137 (1828) 1835 Woleaians
116, 562 Woleai

We went to the eastern side of the island and round its northern tip. We were accompanied by a very joyous little troupe; but when we came to the places where there were women imprisoned, we heard again the annoying farak! farak! as we did on Lougounor.

12: Lutke--141
116, 562, 574

(1828) 1835

Woleaians
Woleai

As usual we were surrounded by most of the male population of the group, and this time there were women too. Several canoes full of them kept circling around the schooner, and they made more noise than all the other boats put together. They did not ask if they might come on board; perhaps they were waiting for the invitation which we did not extend. That may be because they were all dreadfully ugly. It is not likely that there are not some pretty ones on the island; possibly the jealous men do not permit them to leave the house.

13: Lutké--147
116, 562, 609

(1827-1828) 1836

Woleaians
Woleai

The inhabitants of the Ouléaf group, as well as those of the isolated island of Feiss, were less severe towards us, as far as their women were concerned, than the inhabitants of the Lougounor group; they allowed them to be found in our company, and it needed only a short time for an intimate connection to become established between us; in spite of this sort of intimacy and the boundless confidence accorded us, there is not a single individual on the "Séniavine" who can boast of having obtained any favors from a beauty of the low islands of the Carolines.

13: Lutké--149-150 (1827-1828) 1836 Woleaians
116, 562, 437 Woleai

At Ouléaï the women came quite close to our vessel, but they never arrived in the men's canoes. They took pleasure in crying and calling us by our names, which they sometimes pronounced in the most comical manner. Though they reiterated their demands [AN: for ornaments] unceasingly, in order to obtain more than we had given them, they appeared to receive our gifts with a kind of disdain, and this greatly amused us. Some of them wore pretty belts, of the width of about two fingers, made of the wood of cocoanuts and of white shells put together in a way that recalled mosaics...as I wanted to [p. 150] own one of these belts very greatly, I offered them a considerable price, in their eyes, for this single article; but these women multiplied their demands to such an extent on every occasion I yielded to their instances, that I could not succeed in obtaining one for myself. It seems, besides, that the women set great store by them; I sometimes saw men adorn themselves with them, but they were no more inclined to give them up, alleging, to justify their refusal, that this ornament belonged to their wives.

28: Spiro--22
562

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Quite significant was the attention devoted to the women [WPM: See pp. 20-22], for despite the fact that women shoulder most of the work, it was they who were told that they were not to be indolent, but must work, must prepare food and make lavalavs. The men, too, were warned to exercise greater diligence, but not to the same degree as the women."

28: Spiro--78
116, 533, 562

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Though composed by women to be sung at specified occasions, the men know the bwarux and sing them often. In the evening when the young men congregate in the canoe houses, one of the favorite activities is the singing of some bwarux, which affords them great amusement, and whose words elicit the same undercurrent of tittering that the corresponding activity evokes in our culture. Women too, sing bwarux when working together in the house or in the malum, that children, both boys and girls, are exposed to them at an early date."

28: Spiro--99-100
116, 867, 562, 855

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Not only the older sibling but any older boy or girl may play the role, of protector or guardian, as well as enforce the cultural values. One afternoon, Iliakong and Legasugabuk were doing a bwarux dance on the beach. Woromai, a lad of about 19 saw them from his canoe. He immediately shouted at them to stop the dance, which [100] they did.

There seems to be little question but that the men and older boys exercise greater authority over the children than do the women and older girls."

28: Spiro--113-114
116, 462, 858, 562

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-2
Ifalik

"In economic life, the children have certain responsibilities, though here there is an important sexual differential. The little girls begin to assume domestic responsibilities much before the boys, so that the boys of seven or eight may be seen playing in their gangs, while the girls at that age are at home, helping their mothers with the cooking, caring for a younger sibling, collecting flowers for garlands, etc. When a girl reaches the age that she wears a grass skirt, she becomes a mother surrogate to the younger children. She carries them with her, watches over their play, washes them, feeds them, and in general supervises their activities. A boy may, if he likes, perform any of these tasks, but a girl is delegated these responsibilities. The girl assists her mother in household work, helping her to clean the house, and helping in the cooking. By the time she is seven or eight, she is making threads for skirts. She actually does not begin to make or even assist in the making of skirts until after puberty, but she does tie the strips of bark into thread.

The boys this age have no definite economic responsibility, though they may and do assume some on their own initiative. For example, when the men prepare to go [114] fishing, the young four and five year old boys will assist in minor tasks, such as gathering coconut-midribs to be used as skids for the canoes, or to fetch some article which the men wish to use. As the boys get older, they begin to act on their own initiative, particularly with regard to fishing. Boys from the seventh or eighth years may be seen

going surf fishing with their fishing poles, or accompanying an older youth in lagoon fishing in canoes. The older pre-pubertal lads and young adolescents practically have a monopoly on one kind of fishing, the shore trap fishing for the small fish. There are certain seasons of the year when fish, the size of a sardine comes into the lagoon, which the natives catch in a stone trap, or in coconut traps, which they place in the water. Every morning, and some afternoons, the lads mentioned above are busy at work catching these fish. And, it is to be stressed, this is done without adult pressure or orders, but on their own initiative."

28: Spiro--114 [4] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 562, 573 Ifalik

"As the children grow older, the sexes begin to separate. The boys form all-boy gangs, ranging in age from boys ten or eleven years old, through the very young married men. These gangs, completely informal and uninstitutionalized, are definitely local groups. On the island of Felarik, for example, there are two such gangs, one in Rauau, and one in Felarik. The younger members are part of the group, but occupy an inferior status, obeying the older ones. Each gang has a canoe-house in which it spends its time, doing nothing in particular, but sitting around, talking, playing checkers or cards and making rope. At night they assemble in the canoe houses or along the beach, where they remain until it gets dark, returning home or going to meet their lovers. In the past the boys and the young men of the district used to sleep together in the men's club-houses, but no longer do so, because of the fear of the alus, as we have already indicated. However, the young men in the Rauau gang do sleep together, at least during the trade wind season in one of the canoe houses. These young men are together constantly."

28: Spiro--128 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 521, 533, 831, 562 Ifalik

"Sex is a favorite topic of conversation, among the men and women both, though it is completely taboo in mixed company. The men, young and old, sitting about in the canoe houses in the evening sing bwarux, though only the women are supposed to sing them. And there is the almost universally-found ribbing and kidding of others with respect to sex. My informants were very happy to talk to me about sexual relations, and were in constant good humor, kidding and ribbing each other and me throughout. As Aluelimar, the elderly informant put it: 'No can leave talk about women.'"

28: Spiro--130 [2]
116, 522, 831, 562

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"This taboo on overt sexual verbal or physical behavior does not apply in the case of adults and children. During an interview with Lesaligesia, a 12 year old girl, Tom fondled her breasts throughout the interview. She sat through it impassively. He then took from his basket a tube of lipstick I had given him, and pushing the lipstick itself through the tube, he told her that she should show it to the women, and that they would laugh because it resembles a penis. The next day, while we were interviewing her sister, she came into the canoe house. Tom told her that she should go to the lagoon to bathe so that she would have her first menstrual flow, and then she could get married. Lesaligesia became sulky at this jibe, while Tom and her sister went into peals of laughter, thinking this very funny.

Another day we were interviewing Tavelegia, a young girl quite mature, but who had not yet menstruated. Tom asked her if she wanted a husband, and she said, no. He then said that she should marry a dog. Later, while we were still talking, he told her to put her finger up his anus. And still later, when she said she would have to leave to 'make a skirt,' he said to her that she should 'make my faeces.'"

28: Spiro--135 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 562 Ifalik

"Consciously, there seems to be no 'battle of the sexes.' The men told me that women are more important than men ('more high'), because they 'give people', that is, they give birth to children. 'No have woman, no have people. (Therefore), man take talk for woman.' (that is a man will obey the woman.) But this statement seemed to contradict some of the overt practices. For example, a woman who passes a group of men, lowers her head, in the same fashion that all people do when they pass the fanap. When a woman walks from one end of the village to another, she takes the back path, whereas men take the front one. When men gather to eat, women may not join them. Women are not permitted in the canoe-houses."

28: Spiro--135-136 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1-2
116, 562, 593, 796, 462 Ifalik

"If a husband and wife should walk through the village together, the wife always follows behind him, never preceeds him. But what was most impressive with respect to this differential treatment of the sexes was the following treatment, which I observed at each religious ceremony. The religious ceremonies are usually held on Falalap. A channel of about 30 yards separates the two islands. Ordinarily the people walk across the channel, since the water at its highest point only reaches to their chest. Now the people 'dress-up' for the ceremonies--new skirts or loin cloths, painted faces, flower garlands, feather head-dresses, etc. It is understandable that they do not wish to get wet. Consequently what amounts to a ferry service is set up. The young men paddling canoes back and forth across the channel bearing passengers. But the passengers are almost invariably men! Since time is short, and there are not too many canoes, the men ride across, but the women wade through the water, despite the fact that the men would dry off sooner than the women, since they wear only loin cloths. Their answer to this differential treatment was that the men do the hard and dangerous work, whereas women's work is light. 'Man work strong. Woman no can work, for too hard. He work on canoe and house for woman. Very hard work that man. Woman-work more down. Man work on tree, maybe he fall down. [136] He catch fish, maybe shark cut him.' This is most interesting in view of the fact that women actually work much harder and longer than

men. Women almost always have work to perform, whereas the men spend hours just sitting about in the canoe houses. Men's work may theoretically be more dangerous, but no one has ever fallen from a tree, and the men know of only one case in which a man was attacked by a shark. These reasons, therefore, are patent rationalizations."

"Women are 'more high' because they bear children. The day following this discussion with the informants, I was struck by the idea that the stress on the woman's role as the bearer of children might have further implications for the problem of physiological paternity. I asked them, therefore, if the reason they gave for woman's superiority is valid, since they had all told me that man has a share in the procreation of children, as well. This question made them all sit up. They were completely taken aback, and answered as a man: 'You talk true, we talk lie. Man more high. You throw away that paper for yesterday. You put in book, man more high.'

This sudden reversal was quite interesting. So the next day, I assembled a number of women to get their evaluation of relative sexual status. There was a brief pause for reflection, after which they answered that men enjoy greater status as indicated by the fact that a woman must obey her brother. Though there is no full-blown avunculate here, as we have seen, the brother's relationship to his sister and her children is an intimate one, and apparently an authoritative one, as indicated by their answer, and the women's subservience to her brother in this sense emphasized for them the male superiority.

This answer was doubly interesting because a few months later, in discussing this

same matter with the chiefs, they said that men are 'more high,' (17) for the same reason, a man can give orders to his sister, but she cannot give orders to him."

"17. It is of interest to note the conceptualization of social status in spatial terms, which is identical with the usage in English, for example."

28: Spiro--136 a (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 562, 611, 591, 622 Ifalik

"By this time I had become intimate enough with the chiefs, to be able to point up difficulties or problems in their interpretations. I asked whether the two factors of matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence did not indicate female superiority. This, they responded triumphantly, proves the superiority of men. For if there were only women in the house, they would live miserable lives. The houses would be small and there would be no fish to eat, since canoe and house construction, as well as fishing, is man's work. Thus if there were no matrilocal residence, the women would only 'chowchow, but no chow fish.'

The fallacy in the argument is obvious, but I admitted its validity, and then pointed out that they had answered only the matrilocal, not the matrilineal objection. To this they looked quite chagrined, and finally said, 'you talk true.' They were then silent for a long time, as if they were all meditating. Finally, Wolpatau, the highest ranking chief, came forth with a new argument, which we all accepted as incontrovertible. Men are superior to women because only men are chiefs, and women cannot be chiefs (unless there are no men in the chiefly lineages)."

28: Spiro--136 a [2]
116, 562, 828, 764

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Both men and women recognize differential sexual reactions, (temperaments), and numerous men and women I questioned agreed completely, without exception on the following facts. A woman is more sensitive than a man, and is hurt much more readily, so that her feeling of sorrow at the loss of a relative is much greater. This accounts, they say, for her behavior at funerals, tearing her face and hair. (18)

A woman loves her children more intensely than does the man. (19) The man is more prone to anger than the woman, and his anger is more intense. His anger cannot be appeased by his wife, whereas the wife's anger can be assuaged by her husband. A man is braver than a woman, so that the latter fears such dangers as typhoons, sharks, airplanes, etc. more than the man. The woman succumbs to illness more readily than the man. She will take to her bed at small provocation, whereas the men will go about his work."

"18. This funeral behavior is culturally patterned, so that it is interesting to note the use made of a culturally expected behavior pattern being employed to indicate a factor of feminine character.

19. This shown in the songs collected by Dr. Burrows, many of which are mother's lamentation for their dead children or praise of them."

28: Spiro--147 [3]
116, 562, 883, 573

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"The young women do not, as we have already pointed out, associate in gangs, as the young men do. Young women, in their late adolescence are already married, and, like the older women, remain near or about the homes. This means that the young women are integrated earlier into the adult female world, than are the young men into the adult male world."

353 sions were put in bags or boxes of various sorts and slung by ropes from the rafters, the whole upper part of the house thus being a sort of floorless attic.

123 125 The citizens of Ifaluk cooperated nicely in the census operation, though they seemed rather amused at such strange antics. Those who had been weighed and measured loved to stand around and watch the rest as they passed through the routine. It was hard to get some of the [516] people, especially the women, to stand up straight enough for a proper height measurement. They had, in many cases, what seemed to be a permanent crouch, perhaps resulting from the low doorways and interiors, perhaps the product of a sort of chronic deference, since the women of Ifaluk knew their place—always bowing respectfully in the [600] presence of the male animal. (Ted suspected that this show was superficial and that the women, there as everywhere, knew their power and [562] how to use it; one of the five chiefs, it turned out, was a woman.)

291 There were no ideas of modesty associated with the breasts; and the ladies didn't seem to be bothered by the fact that their skirts gaped rather badly near the belt-line behind. But they were very modest about legs from the knee up and were careful never to expose an inch of thigh. Their preoccupation with keeping their skirts close about their legs was clear enough as they stepped on the scales. Don, impressed by their modest maneuvers as he tried to read the dial on the scales, remarked that they would really be shocked by an American bathing suit.

855 861 The people seemed to take wonderful care of the children, the men holding babies and comforting the young as often as the women. Ted and his colleague, Spiro, in their 1948 study, found that the kids were never spanked, and rarely yelled at—though it was said that they sometimes doused them in the lagoon if they got too obstreperous. At the movies on the NETTLE Don noticed one man gently ladling sea water on a bawling baby. The baby stopped crying quickly—and he made a mental note to try this on his own daughter when he got back home.

854 The smallest infants were in cradles. These were square boxes with low sides, fastened by a bridle of cords from the corners, and suspended a few inches above the floor by a rope from the rafters. The babies were tucked in with some old clothes, and seemed contented enough.

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

five chief) weighed 182 pounds with a height of 5′ 7½″. Wolpaitig came closest of any man on the island to having a paunch.

The women were considerably more under American averages for height or weight. They were generally only an inch or so over or under five feet, weighing not much over a hundred pounds. The heaviest, a matron named Ietili of the Garotrong household, weighed 150 pounds, and was 5′ 1½″ tall. Ted suspected that the small size and light weight of the women was a consequence of the fact that they carried out the regular toil of the island—the heavy gardening work of the taro swamps as well as the work around the houses.

The Ifalukians would be classed as Micronesians: but what that means is anybody's guess. "Micronesia" is a geographical term to cover the hundreds of "tiny islands" of the Marianas, the Carolines, the Marshalls and the Gilberts. The inhabitants of these island groups, the Micronesians, are hardly to be distinguished from the more famous Polynesians: a rapid survey of several anthropology texts shows that the two are more often classed together than not. The inhabitants of the various island groups of Micronesia are certainly more diverse, both culturally and physically, than the inhabitants of Polynesia: but the similarities among all of these light-skinned people of the Pacific are greater than their differences. And the problem of the origin and history of the Ifalukians, of the Caroline Islanders, of the Micronesians, cannot be separated from the much-discussed problem of the origin of the Polynesians.

I think part of the European fascination with Polynesia (which would apply equally to the people of the central Carolines) comes from the fact that these people look very much like ourselves. The features of the Ifalukians were very European, and I amused myself by noting resemblances in certain individuals, in features or apparent characters, to particular friends or acquaintances in the States. The people were not really dark-skinned: both Don and I acquired a skin color within a month that matched the Ifalukian average, as determined by frequent comparisons of arms placed side by side. A pair of naked legs walking by the Fan Nap, observed under the low over-hang of thatch, could not be identified as Ifalukian or American. The Ifalukians

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

Polynesian cultures, had almost endless ways of catching fish. Individuals or small groups fished with spears or with hook and line. A method that appealed to me particularly was to attach the hook and line to a kite, which was sailed from a canoe in the lagoon: thus combining the pleasures of fishing with those of kite-flying (one of the numerous instances where I couldn't decide whether a particular operation should be called "work" or "play"). There were also a variety of ways of trapping fish, with traps ranging from the large, permanent stone weirs built along the lagoon shore, down through various types of wattle traps, to improvised affairs of plaited coconut leaf sometimes set by the women in the shallows—the only fishing operation of the women, aside from collecting crabs, shellfish and the like. Women, in fact, were subject to various sorts of taboos in relation to fishing, and sex was strictly suppressed during a prolonged fishing operation.

There were various ways of catching special fish, like tuna, bonito and flying fish, when these appeared, but I didn't get to see any of these operations. Later in the summer, however, Don and I did spend a very active day trying to get a complete photographic record of a lagoon seining operation—the kind of fishing called yating.

The Ifalukians had an immense supply of seines—great piles stored in each of the canoe houses. The accumulation of seines and of rope seemed a direct consequence of the almost compulsive male habit of making sennit twine. Whenever a group of men were sitting around gossiping, or helping us gather information, or quietly watching the horizon, some of them would pull handfuls of fluffy leached and pounded coconut fibers out of their purses, and start twisting them into twine. This process, like knitting with the women of the West, did not interfere with either conversation or thought; and since it went on constantly, the twine output was considerable. The sennit twine had a great many different uses, but much of it ended woven into seines.

In the case of the particular yating operation that we photographed, the morning started with groups of men shouldering lengths of seine and carrying them down from the canoe houses to load them into canoes beached on the lagoon shore. The canoes took off in orderly procession, each dumping its seine in turn and connecting with the next until there must have been nearly a mile of seine forming a great

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

CHAPTER V

MOSTLY ABOUT FOOD

461 517 567 Much time on Ifaluk was spent in sitting—men sitting around the canoe houses, women sitting around the cook houses. I had the impression that the men were more apt to just sit, and the women to sit and chatter; but this impression was probably a carry-over from preconceived ideas about my own culture. Certainly, in fact, the men in the canoe houses often carried on interminable conversations; but certainly also they were frequently silent and contemplative—or drowsy.

This fitted my temperament fine. Since childhood I have been an inveterate sitter (and day dreamer). My most frequent companion 643 in the sitting process on Ifaluk was Fagolier, the paramount chief. From the beginning he fascinated me with his poise and dignity, his character-lined face. I had a curious feeling of rapport sitting with him, sharing a mat or a coconut log, smoking, occasionally exchanging a grin, but feeling no real need of trying to say anything.

He had all of the qualities that should go with the paramount chieftainship—the assurance and humility of security; a calm, reliable decisiveness; an ever-present courtesy and thoughtfulness. I wondered often what he was really like, how much this picture of him was the product of my own imaginings, whether I saw him as he was, or whether I saw only the projection of my own concepts of a chief. Yet I gained confidence in my mental portrait because it always seemed to correspond with my observations. Then I would still wonder whether this was a tribute to Fagolier, or a tribute to the flexibility of my

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

milk or toddy as a liquid for cooking, than as a food in itself. But the green nuts everywhere provided a handy source of drink; and the translucent, jelly-like flesh of these green nuts, eaten after the milk has been drunk, was surely a highly nutritious, though perhaps minor, food.

When a coconut sprouts, the hollow of the nut becomes filled with the white spongy tissue of a special absorbing organ (an extension of the cotyledon). This spongy tissue has a pleasant, sweetish taste and the Ifalukians were very fond of it. It often seemed to me that the juice of green coconuts filled the role on Ifaluk of soft drinks or mid-morning coffee in our culture; and that the spongy tissue of these sprouted nuts corresponded to candy bars, a tasty snack always readily available. The Ifalukian product, in both cases, would seem to be more "healthful" than its Western counterpart.

Toddy, or hachi, the sap that oozed from the cut flower stalks of coconuts, was a very important element in the Ifalukian dietary. Many palms have a strong flow of sap into the large, rapidly-growing flower stalks, and people in several parts of the world have learned to use this—most notoriously in a fermented form. The flow of sap was better in some coconut palms than in others, and on Ifaluk the particularly good palms were marked off for this special purpose of supplying toddy. Every morning and every evening all of the young men of the island were off on their rounds of collection, each with his special beat.

The toddy palms all had notches cut in the trunks to facilitate climbing. A man would go to each of his palms in succession, climb up to the crown, pour the sap accumulated in a coconut shell into the bottle he carried, shear off a thin slice from the end of the cut flower stalk to stimulate sap flow, replace the coconut shell to catch the drip, and go on to the next palm. Several quarts of the fresh sap were thus brought into every household each morning and evening.

The rich, sweetish sap was reserved primarily for the women and children—its place in the diet of Ifaluk seemed to correspond to milk in the diet of the West, and the regularity of the young men with their toddy chores reminded me strongly of the regularity of the milking chore in the rural West. It was, in fact, the only regularity we were